

## EL PASO COUNTY SPENDS \$65,000 ON NEW SCHOOLS DURING THE YEAR

Concordia District Gets Two Modern Buildings; Ysleta Gets Two, One Costing \$15,000; Fabens Is Building \$7500 Structure; County Teaching Force Increased and Number of Pupils Show Substantial Growth.

THE year 1915 marked a new era in the history of the rural schools of the county when work was started or completed on school houses aggregating in cost nearly \$65,000 during the same period \$44,500 in bonds were voted for school house construction.

**Marked Awakening of People.**  
The year seems to have been characterized by a universal awakening among school patrons of the county to the need of better housing conditions and of providing for the future. The natural growth of population in the rural districts and the necessity of providing room for the increased attendance that will result from the compulsory attendance law, which goes into effect during the approaching summer, were undoubtedly conditions that led to this awakening. But it is also true that there has come a more general realization of the benefits of education. This is particularly noticeable in the districts populated largely by Mexicans. In American communities the patrons have always been alive to the needs and have sought to improve conditions, even in the face of scarcity of funds.

**Two New Schools For Concordia.**  
Work was started during the latter part of last summer on two school buildings for the Concordia district, which takes in the additions lying east and north of the city limits. These buildings are approaching completion and with equipment will cost about \$20,000 each. The contract price for each was \$18,548. Each will contain eight class rooms on the first floor, and room in a half-basement for the manual training and domestic science departments, as well as a social center, where community gatherings may

be held. One of the buildings is located in the northern part of Grand View addition, while the other is in the Lincoln Park addition. The buildings will be paid for out of a bond issue of \$65,000 voted in 1914 and sold during the past year. The sites cost approximately \$12,000.

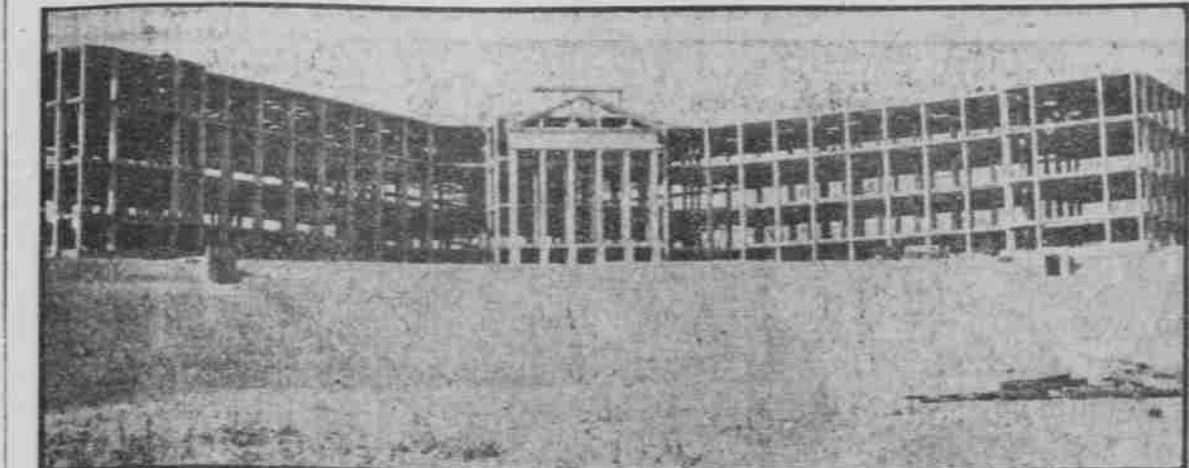
**Ysleta Has New School House.**  
The school children of Ysleta are now comfortably housed in a \$15,000 brick school building, started and completed during 1915. The building is two stories in height and contains eight class rooms. At San Jose, in the Allamore district, a \$10,000 abode school house of two rooms was built. These two buildings were constructed with funds secured from a \$17,000 bond issue voted during the early part of the year.

**Fabens Has \$7500 Building.**  
A four-room school house, costing \$7500, is nearing completion at Fabens. The Mexican school at that place has been repaired. The money for these structures came from a \$10,000 bond issue.

Activity in construction work will continue during the present year, according to present indications. On December 30 the Smelter district voted \$15,000 bonds for a new building to be located on a block of ground donated by Stewart & Crawford. Last year the San Elizario district voted \$5000 in bonds for a new school, but the attorney general held that as the town had ceased to be incorporated, the independent school district had automatically gone out of existence. Since then the district has been made a common school district, and now a petition is being circulated for a \$15,000 issue.

**Elections in Two Districts.**  
In the Socorro district, a petition is

## NEW EL PASO HIGH SCHOOL



THIS picture shows the concrete and steel frame of the new El Paso high school, which is to cost over half a million dollars. In the foreground is shown the excavation for the stadium, which the school house faces. The two entrances into the basement of the high school from the stadium are shown in the picture. The dressing rooms for the athletes will be in the basement of the building. The stadium is to have concrete seats. The contract has been let for these, to cost \$26,000.

being circulated for an election to vote on a \$15,000 issue, together with a local maintenance tax; and in the "island" district an election has just been ordered for a vote on a \$3000 issue for a new building as well as a local maintenance tax.

The Allamore bond issue of \$1500, voted in 1915, is still on the market. When sold, the money will be used for a new building. The \$5000 bonds voted in the Vinton district in 1915 are still unsold.

The rural schools are maintained with funds received from the state school fund, but in some of the districts this money has been supplemented with local maintenance taxes. During the past year the Ysleta district voted a tax of 20 cents on the \$100 valuation; the Vinton district, a tax of 15 cents on the \$100; and the Allamore district, an increase from 7 1/2 to 20 cents on the \$100.

**Course Includes Eighth Grade.**  
The state course of study is taught in the rural schools of the county, and in a number of the schools work up to and including the eighth grade is given. While it is not desired to undertake the teaching of any high school work in the rural schools, awaiting the time when the county can build a high school, nevertheless some work of this character is done in the larger schools, particularly in Sierra Blanca, which is so far removed from El Paso as to make it difficult for pupils who have finished the eighth grade work, to come to this city for the high school work.

The completion of the eighth grade work in the rural schools entitles the pupils to enter the El Paso high school, but non-residents of the city are required to pay tuition for this instruction.

**To Introduce Kindergarten.**  
Miss Myra Winkler, county superintendent of public instruction, is exerting her best efforts towards enlarging the scope of the county schools. It is her intention later to introduce kindergarten work into the schools, and to enlarge the agricultural instruction work. Considerable progress has already been made along the latter line during the past few months, but the work is only starting. Just prior to the opening of the rural schools last fall, and during the teachers' institute, J. W. Neill, of the state department of agriculture, spent two days in El Paso and the valley. During this time he gave several talks on general agricultural subjects and upon the care of crops and poultry. His work was supplemented some time later by Judge Ed R. Kone, of the same department, who spent about a week in the valley, delivering lectures to school children and patrons on various agricultural subjects. Still later a "movable school" was conducted by six instructors from the Texas A. & M. college, when lectures on various topics were given to school children and patrons in the various schools.

**To Introduce Agricultural Course.**  
In the meantime A. G. Graham, county farm demonstrator, has been working upon a course of 12 lessons on elementary agricultural subjects to be taught in the rural schools. These lessons will shortly be submitted for use in the various rural schools. At the same time Mr. Graham has been at work organizing corn clubs among the school children. As a result of these activities it is hoped to greatly develop the agricultural work of the county schools, resulting in creating interest in farm work among the school children, as well as improving general farming conditions in the valley.

**Teaching Force Increased.**  
An indication of the growth of the county school system is shown in the fact that whereas during the 1914-15 school year there were 28 teachers employed, now the force numbers 52. A state law fixes the salary of rural school teachers, holders of permanent certificates receiving \$55 per month; holders of first grade certificates \$75 per month, and holders of second grade certificates \$60. School trustees, through local maintenance taxes, may increase the salaries of teachers, but in the absence of such local aid the salaries must conform to the state schedule.

**Increase of 2002 in Scholastic.**  
The scholastic census of the county, independent districts not included, completed last spring, showed a gain for the rural schools of 212 over 1914, the figures being 3558, as against 3744 in 1914. The census of the San Elizario independent district showed 220 children of school age, an increase of 25 over 1914, while the independent

district of El Paso showed 12,704, or an increase of 1941 over 1914. The scholastic population of the entire county was shown as 17,980, or an increase of 2952 over 1914.

It should be noted that while the census of 1915 classes San Elizario as an independent school district, the attorney general has ruled that no such district exists for the reason that it automatically went out of existence when the town ceased to be an incorporated community. The district is now a common school district and is known as district No. W 7.

**County School Board.**  
While a state law has been in existence for some years, authorizing county boards of education, it was not until last spring that such a body was created in El Paso county. At that time, Miss Winkler set the facts before the county commissioners' court, with the result that a board was appointed. Later, these same men became candidates for election and were all retained. The board is composed of five men, one from each commissioner's precinct, and one from the county at large, as follows:

Precinct No. 1, Charles A. Kinkel, Vinton.

Precinct No. 2, W. T. Duncan, Ysleta.

Precinct No. 3, J. H. Webb, Clint.

Precinct No. 4, W. C. Carson, Sierra Blanca.

County at large, G. P. Putnam, El Paso.

**Urges State Normal For County.**  
Much of the progress that the county schools are making is due to the efforts of Miss Winkler, superintendent. In the work of arousing interest in the work of new school houses and local maintenance taxes, she devoted much time, and was to a large extent responsible for the success of the measures. It was through her efforts that representatives from the agricultural department visited El Paso during the fall. She is a strong advocate of the establishment in El Paso county of a state normal school, and has done much towards crystallizing sentiment in favor of the project.

None of the state normal train teachers for the work along the border, and in view of the fact that there are schools in the border country from El Paso to Brownsville, where special training for the teaching of Spanish speaking children is essential, a normal devoting much attention to this line of work is deemed necessary.

## CITY'S GROWTH STRIKINGLY SHOWN IN SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS

To Teach Children Attending El Paso's Public Schools Requires a Force of 267 Teachers; School Buildings Taxed by Large Attendance; Many Good Private Schools and Several Colleges Add to Prestige.

NO greater evidence of the growth of El Paso in 1915 can be found than the increase in the enrollment and attendance at the public schools. The growth in attendance was, as a matter of fact, little short of remarkable, and has presented a problem of housing greater than that ever faced by the city before. When a city increases its scholastic population in five months, it puts a great burden upon the school organization, and the more than five months of the present school year have presented a problem calling for thought and wisdom on the part of both the school board and the heads of the schools.

**Heavy Gain in Scholastics.**  
The scholastic census of the city schools, taken last May, showed 12,704 children of school age within the city. This was an increase of 1941 over the census of 1914, which showed 11,863. In September, the first month of the present school year, the enrollment was 8908. The December report showed an enrollment of 8852, or an increase of 523 in five months. The increase of December over the previous December was 1752. The average attending for the month of December was 7694, against 5902 in December, 1914, an increase of 1070. The month, however, was hardly a guide to the attendance, for there was a prevalence of grip that kept many children from school.

The large increase in the scholastic population gave indication of a large increase in attendance, but the school authorities were hardly prepared for the heavy enrollment of the first month, and the problem of taking care of the children in the limited space afforded by the school buildings was unexpected.

It had been decided by the school board, before the opening of school, that it would be necessary to adopt some system that would give the children more time outside of class rooms, and Supt. E. J. Tighe proposed a modification of the Gary system that would devote more time to play and the special subjects and less time to the regular studies; his recommendations were adopted.

**Gary System Can't Be Discarded.**  
The Gary system was installed in eight of the schools—Aoy, Alta Vista, Bailey, Beall, Lamar, San Jacinto, Villas and Alamo. The change in the system was so radical that it caused much unfavorable comment in various quarters and resulted in much discussion through the columns of the newspapers. The organized play program came in for considerable criticism. During December the school board held a meeting, at which the opinions on the system were gained from the various principals. It developed that a majority of the principals favored the plan. A few nights later, Supt. Tighe, in a report on the previous meeting, with the principals, said:

"When we introduced the Gary plan into several additional schools this year, it was for the purpose of demonstrating its practicability touching the following phases of school organization: First, the advantage of having specially prepared instructors to teach drawing, primary manual training and music; second, the need of supervised play periods with organized games in place of the old recess plan, which

lacked these educational forces; and third, the desirability of the duplicate (two classes to a room) plan in primary grades over the half time arrangement which had been used here to meet crowded conditions."

Supt. Tighe called attention to results of the meeting of the school board and the principals on December 16, and continued:

"On the first object mentioned above, I believe they (the principals) were all agreed that better work was being accomplished in the special subjects under the new plan than had heretofore been done under the old plan. Five stated that as good or better work was being done in the regular subjects (reading, writing, arithmetic, etc.), while three did not think this work as good as formerly. As to the educational advantages of supervised play, all seemed to be unanimous in the opinion that it was better than the old recess plan, which was usually relaxation without supervision. Four of the principals thought the play periods could be better arranged to meet the needs of the public. The others seemed to be satisfied with the existing arrangement. On the third point—part time versus Gary duplicate class plan—the verdict stood five for the Gary plan, two for part time and one undecided because of lack of experience with the part time plan."

**Recommend Change.**  
Supt. Tighe further stated that in at least two schools, the Alamo and Beall, the new system was begun under the most unfavorable conditions. In these two schools the enrollment, he stated, was so much larger than had been anticipated that sufficient class rooms, equipment or playground space could not be provided, and the conditions had not been greatly improved since then.

In view of the findings, he recommended that the system be discontinued at Alamo, Beall and Lamar, and a return be made to the part time plan; and that next May the patrons of each school district be asked to state their preference for the old or new plan of organization.

After consideration of the recommendations of Supt. Tighe, the school board recently took official action by which the Alamo and Beall schools return to the part time system, while the Lamar school will retain some of the special features work but will adopt the part time system in the first three grades. This leaves the Gary system in the Aoy, Alta Vista, Bailey, San Jacinto and Villas schools. The Franklin, Douglass, Sunset and Highland Park schools did not adopt the system at the beginning of the year because of the fact that they are smaller schools.

**Playground Teachers.**  
A feature of the school work under the Gary system is the supervised play. There are 23 playground teachers, trained in the work of directing play, and all playground work is now under the direction of these teachers. Various games are played and effort is made not only to develop the children physically, but put forward certain principles in character building, such as fair play and respect for the rights of others. This work is under the direction of J. H. Stine, supervisor of (Continued on Next Page.)

## A NEW COUNTY SCHOOL



THIS shows the skeleton work on one of two new county schools now being built in the suburbs of El Paso. The one shown above is being erected on McKinley avenue, near the Country club. Another building of similar type is being erected in Lincoln Park. Both are of reinforced concrete and are modern in every respect. They will cost \$20,000 each. At present they are only one story with basement, but are built to take a second story later. The county has recently completed a handsome new school building, two stories high, in Ysleta, at a cost of \$14,900, and is now using the building. Another school of three rooms is being erected at Fabens. All this work has been done under the direction of Miss Myra Winkler, county school superintendent, the county school board, and the trustees of the different districts. The Lincoln Park school and the McKinley avenue school are both in the Concordia school district.

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